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CUAUTLA

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE
NEW YORK HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, APRIL 4TH, 1893

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OF MEXICO

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THE SIEGE OF CUAUTLA.

THE BUNKER HILL OF MEXICO.

I am to tell you to-night a story of the Mexican Revolution. It would be an appropriate introduction, if I had the time, to describe the origin of the Mexican race and show how the Spaniard conquered the men of Aztec land with his sword, and won the hearts of the women, and that thus the Mexican race began ; to trace the evolution of this race through successive generations and show how, being specially fitted for the environment, it increased and multiplied, while the pure Spaniard barely held his own, and the unmixed Indian wasted away before the new conditions of life brought about by the advent of the European.

But the hour which you so graciously give me to-night is too short for all this, and I must jump at once over two centuries and a half and take the race as I find it, in its maturity.

The time has come for independence. In the nature of things the colonies on this side of the ocean cannot remain forever connected with their mother countries. A revolution is inevitable in Mexico as in the United States. It inheres in the very nature of things.

We are wont to boast of the wonderful success that we had in overthrowing the English authority and establishing a stable, orderly, and efficient government for ourselves, and we swell with pride as we compare our triumphant happiness with the troubles and the sorrows that Mexico has had ; but if we consider carefully the difficulties to be overcome in the two countries, think what they had to do compared with

what we have done, and place our real work by the side of theirs, we shall perhaps learn to appreciate that the people in Mexico are entitled to quite as much credit as we are.

All that our fathers had to accomplish by their revolution was to dethrone the authority of the king, and substitute some other central power in his place. The whole minor machinery of government was ready to go on the same as before. The change was only a change of head. The towns, counties, and states were already organized and performing, efficiently and well, the ordinary functions of government. Our Revolutionary War really accomplished a change of sovereignty more fanciful than real, and the subsequent adoption of the Constitution was a matter which followed quite naturally and with comparatively little difficulty.

We had, it is true, to build a nation, but the foundations were already laid deep in the experience of centuries. We were furnished with plans, wisely drawn and carefully perfected by accomplished architects, and we had skilled and experienced artisans to do the work. In Mexico they had no foundations, no plans, no experience, and no artisans. The people had to commence at the beginning ; they had to learn even the rudiments of self-government and the very alphabet of statecraft.

What we had to do was done by a people who for centuries had been educated to do their own thinking, solve their own problems, and manage their own affairs, both in Church and State. In Mexico it had to be done by a new race, which had never been taught to think or to act in public affairs for itself, or to meddle with social, political, or religious questions.

We, it is true, had to make bricks, but we had plenty of straw and abundance of workmen, who knew how to mould and fashion the clay ; in Mexico they had to make bricks just the same, but without straw or brick-makers.

It was 1800.

The colonies in the North had carried on a successful war of independence, freed themselves from the domination of Great Britain, formed a constitution and government of their own, and were on the high-road to prosperity.

Across the ocean France had risen in rebellion against the despot-

ism of the Bourbons, had overthrown titles, caste, and authority, and had enthroned first the mob and then Napoleon.

Down through Louisiana and Texas the immigrant was slowly working his way from the United States, carrying with him into Mexico the ideas of liberty which had triumphed here. Into Mexico also was coming from across the ocean the French ideas. The works of Voltaire and Rousseau, prohibited by the State and burned by the Inquisition, were secretly read by the people. Revolution was in the air. It must come. It could not be long delayed.

Across the ocean, even in old rock-ribbed, priest-ridden Spain, things were moving. Carlos IV. had mounted the throne in 1788. He was a good-natured idiot. He differed from his predecessors only in being good natured. He had a queen who was as bad as he was imbecile, and the queen had a lover, Manuel Godoy, a handsome, ambitious, and corrupt libertine, whom she took from a subordinate position in the army and made Prime Minister of Spain, so that he might divide his time between idle dalliance with her and ruling half the world.

France and Spain were neighbors. Napoleon was First Consul on one side of the Pyrenees and Manuel Godoy Prime Minister on the other. The lion and the lamb lay down together, and when they rose in the morning the lion and the lamb were one; the lamb was inside, the lion. They played war a little at first, and then made a treaty of peace in which France got everything and Spain nothing. From this treaty Godoy gets his name. He is known in history as "The Prince of Peace."

Things went on in this way until 1808. The rule of Godoy became so bad that even Spain could not stand it, and it can be imagined how bad it must have been. So they rose in rebellion, compelled Carlos to abdicate, and the "Prince of Peace" to leave his country for his country's good.

Ferdinand VII. succeeded Carlos. He was a worthy son of his father. A new Spanish king always inherited all the vices of his ancestors, and for a change usually added a few peculiar to himself. When Carlos had abdicated in favor of Ferdinand, he did n't mean it, but Ferdinand did. Carlos wanted to come back to the throne, but Ferdinand objected. They submitted their differences to arbitration;

the arbitrator was Napoleon. This time the lion lay down with two lambs, and the result was the same as before. Napoleon compromised the difficulty by making Carlos and Ferdinand both prisoners, and placing his brother Joseph upon the throne of Spain. Carlos and Ferdinand had both agreed to abide by the decision of Napoleon, and they could not very consistently object to it, especially as they were in Napoleon's power and wore their heads upon their shoulders by his grace. Joseph, as they had given him the throne, naturally did n't offer any objections to the proceedings. There was only one party interested that was in a position to object. The people of Spain had not been consulted, and again they rose in rebellion, and civil war followed. They did n't want Joseph for king, and they could n't get either Carlos or Ferdinand, and there was nobody else lying around loose who could be conveniently put upon the throne. Therefore, from sheer desperation, because they did n't have anything else to do, they tried the experiment of governing themselves.

When in England there has been a revolution and they have wished to dethrone a king (and they have never hesitated to do it when occasion required), they have always had a parliament at hand which represented the nation and local and municipal governments managed by the people. But in Spain they had never had a national parliament, and local governments were all substantially dependent upon the central authority. Under such conditions the only way to carry on a revolution is by a junta, and Spain tried government by junta. A junta is a body, either entirely self-constituted or deriving its authority from some other self-constituted body which assumes to speak for the people, like the nine tailors of Tooley Street. If the nation likes it, it obeys the Junta ; if it disapproves, it cuts off the heads of the members and tries again. The only way you can tell whether a nation is ripe for a revolution, or whether it will approve of any particular junta, is to try it. If the members retain their heads, it is a success ; otherwise more or less of a failure. In Spain, about this time, they experimented with several juntas. There was the Junta of Seville, the Junta of Oviedo, and several other outlying juntas, all claiming to a greater or less extent, the supreme authority. Then all the juntas came together and compromised, and for a while there was a central junta, and this

was followed by an attempt at a national congress on the Island of Leon, to which deputies from the Spanish-American possessions were invited.

It was 1810. The people in Mexico had been brought up to believe implicitly in the divine right of the king. He was the head of the State and the Church. His voice was the voice of God. If any one wanted to prosper during life, or to go to Heaven after death, he must acknowledge the authority of the king and obey the priest. There was never a people in all the world, since time began, in whom the sentiment of loyalty was stronger than in the people of Mexico towards the Spanish sovereign. It had survived the rule of the basest of kings, the most corrupt of ministers, and the worst of viceroys. It had survived oppression, contumely, and contempt; it seemed strong enough to survive anything.

But now arose a dilemma. Who was the king? Whose voice was really the voice of God? What particular authority was entitled to their obedience? Here were manifold voices, all thundering in their ears at the same time, and each claiming to speak by divine right.

(1) Carlos IV. thought that he, although a prisoner in the hands of Napoleon, was still a king, and that his abdication, having been brought about by force, should be considered of no effect, and he asked to be obeyed.

(2) Ferdinand VII., also Napoleon's prisoner, having been crowned on his father's abdication, thought that he was king, and that his voice was the voice of God.

(3) Joseph Bonaparte, having seated himself perforce upon the throne as the successor of the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons, wearing at least a prophet's mantle, claimed their obedience.

(4) The Junta of Séville, assuming to represent the Spanish Sovereign, whoever he might be, claimed that it was the voice of God, and should be obeyed.

(5) The Junta of Oviedo claimed the same thing.

(6) The Congress or Cortes on the Island of Leon set up the same claim.

(7) About this time a ship landed at Vera Cruz, bearing a letter from the Spanish Infanta, the sister of Ferdinand VII., claiming the

regency during Ferdinand's captivity for her infant son, and asked obedience to him and to her.

(8) It was during this period also that an Indian descendant of Montezuma appeared in the streets of Mexico, and claimed that the divine right of the ancient Aztec sovereign had descended upon his shoulders and that he spoke the voice of God. His claim was the subject of some ridicule, but I have never been able to see why it was n't as well founded as that of any of the others.

(9) Viceroy Iturrigaray held the actual reins of power in Mexico, and as there was a good deal of doubt as to whose viceroy he was, he was disposed to set up business on his own account and to demand obedience to Señor Iturrigaray, individually.

There were no railroads in Mexico. There was no easy communication between the different sections of the country. There was only one newspaper, and that was the official organ under the control of the government, and there were few post-offices or post-roads. Ideas could not spread very rapidly in such a community. But at last the situation of affairs became so complicated that it gradually began to dawn, even upon the minds of the people in Mexico, that perhaps they ought to have a little something themselves to say upon the subject ; possibly the people might after all learn to govern themselves.

Our forefathers had risen in rebellion because England claimed the right to tax the colonists of America six pence a pound upon the tea they used. The total tax collected from all the English colonies, if they had paid it loyally, might have been perhaps a hundred thousand dollars a year.

For three hundred years Mexico had been constantly transferring her treasure to Spain, and at the period to which we have now arrived her annual tribute, over and above all the expenses of her own government, was fourteen million dollars clean profit to the Spanish crown. But that was not all. In late years, during the war with France, Spain had been in the habit of sending to Mexico for a loan whenever she was particularly hard pressed for money. It was called a loan by way of courtesy. The little ceremony of re-payment, usually supposed to be a feature of a loan transaction, was entirely omitted. At one time Mexico, in this way, loaned Spain twenty millions, again fourteen, and

still again nine millions. At another time the Spanish king, owing a debt of some three millions of pounds to England, cavalierly gave the latter country an order on Mexico for the money, and Mexico loyally paid it, to the surprise of both Spain and England.

In return for all this what was Spain doing for the most profitable colony that any nation ever had? No one was allowed to occupy any high or important position in Mexico who had not been born in Spain. Mexico was ruled from Spain and by Spaniards. Her rulers had little knowledge of the country and no permanent interest in it. All they wanted was to make as much out of it as they could while they were there, and go home to spend it. So, too, all the profitable trade of Mexico was in the hands of Spaniards born in Spain. Monopolies were granted freely by the Spanish Government to Spanish merchants, which made it impossible for the native-born Mexican to compete with them, and the people had to foot the bills. The wealth and opportunities of Mexico were in the hands of the Spaniards. In the Church as well as in the State Spaniards held all the high positions. Social distinction was confined to Spaniards. It was only those actually born in Spain who could hope for anything in the colony. A child born in Mexico from Spanish parents was ostracized till the day of its death. The Creole, although of unmixed Spanish ancestry, could hope for nothing. The pride of the Spanish-born stranger rose above even parental love.

And yet not two per cent. of all the people of Mexico were of Spanish birth. The ninety-eight per cent. had the proud distinction of being allowed to labor for the honor, the glory, and the wealth of the other two. Six millions of people were living and toiling and slaving for the benefit of one hundred thousand!

What a justification is there here for a revolution, compared with the little tax on tea which had lost to England the best colonies she ever had!

The revolution broke out in the little town of Dolores, in the Province of Guanajuato, far in the North. It was led by a priest, Miguel Hidalgo. There had been several abortive efforts before this time. During the vice-royalty of Iturrigaray a plan had been formed to declare the independence of Mexico from Spain, and to have the Viceroy himself lead the enterprise. Iturrigaray, like Barkis, seemed willing. But

the Spanish residents suspected what was going on, made the Viceroy a prisoner, and sent him back to Spain.

Later, at Valladolid in the West, the patriots had laid another plan to free their country, but the leaders were again betrayed and the enterprise was nipped in the bud.

This movement which Hidalgo led had its origin at Queretaro. It had been decided to raise the cry of independence upon a feast day, when the people would be assembled there in large numbers; but a traitor again appears, hastens the climax, and Hidalgo on hearing that he was betrayed, without waiting for the feast day or the assembly, raised at once, in his own little village of Dolores, the cry "Viva nuestra Señora de Guadalupe; viva la independencia." "Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe [the patron saint of Mexico]; long live independence." His followers, whom he could not long control changed it to "Viva nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, muera el mal Gobierno, mueran los Gachupines!" "Long live our Lady of Guadalupe, perish the bad government, death to the Spaniards." The cry is known in history as "El Grito de Dolores." The news spread and the people everywhere flocked to Hidalgo's standard. He led a mob (I will not call it an army) against Queretaro, and sacked it; then against Guajuato, sacked that also and put the garrison to the sword in cold blood. Later he massacred all the prisoners who had been captured. For a few months he had an undisputed career of triumph. He led his horde toward the City of Mexico and Mexico trembled. But the Viceroy Venegas and General Calleja, who afterwards became viceroy, organized a successful defence, and their well-trained troops were able to disperse this mob on the Bridge of Calderon, and finally the leaders, Hidalgo, Allende, Aldamas, and others were captured in the North and shot at Chihuahua.

It is common in Mexico to call Hidalgo the Washington of their revolution. I would not for the world say aught against the integrity of his character or the patriotism of his motives. There is nothing to lead us to believe that in all this revolutionary movement he was not actuated by a pure love for his country, and a desire to benefit his race. He devoted his life to their service, and he met a brave and heroic death. But his effort was crude, ill planned, organized badly, and

carried out worse. He vainly thought that with a mob of undisciplined men, with women and children following, he could meet trained soldiers upon the battle-field. He imagined that numbers only were necessary.

The pillage of these towns, the robbery of their treasure, and the massacre of the garrisons and of the prisoners show not so much that he was deficient in humanity as that he lacked statesmanship. The one thing that he needed was the substantial support of the intelligent, conservative masses of the community. The course he took was the one of all others most calculated to drive these from his standard. The best elements of the people must always shrink from such a cause. It were better to endure even all that the Spaniard could inflict than the evils which seemed to follow in the train of Hidalgo.

This seed of pillage and massacre sown by Hidalgo and his followers bore bitter fruit for long years. Many of the best of the creoles, whose sympathies and interests were naturally with their countrymen, were by these excesses driven to the royalists' side, and fought in the ranks with the soldiers of Spain. It was not till 1821 that the butchery at Guanajuato was so far forgotten that the native-born Mexicans were substantially united in the cause of freedom and independence. Then, and then only, after the best blood of the country has been shed, and its best men had perished, could the cause succeed. Long and bitterly did Mexico suffer for Hidalgo's folly.

He failed as such a man, pursuing such a policy, must inevitably have failed ; and while we give him credit for the purity of his motives and the nobility of his character ; while we recognize that the cry that was raised in Dolores in 1810 was the commencement of the struggle which ended in the triumph of independence under Iturbide in 1821, and of good government under Porfirio Diaz in 1876 ; while we fully recognize and extol his purpose and his patriotism, I cannot regard Hidalgo as a leader worthy of his position, or entitled for a moment to be placed by the side of our Washington.

Later historians, upon a more careful consideration of Mexican history, are inclined to give the honor of the leadership of the Mexican Revolution to a man, the purity of whose life and the patriotism of whose motives were unexcelled even by Hidalgo, and who had in ad-

dition proved himself to be one of the most heroic of soldiers, the greatest of commanders, and the best of statesmen.

José Maria Morelos was born in the year 1765, near the city of Valladolid, in the State of Michoacan, on the Pacific coast of Mexico. His father was a carpenter; his mother the daughter of a school teacher. José had only the barest rudiments of an education in his boyhood, and in his early youth his father died, leaving him to the care of his uncle, a freighter, and José drove mules until he was thirty-two. He always, however, yearned for an education and desired to enter the service of the church. At thirty-two he contrived to get admission to the college of St. Nicolas, of which Miguel Hidalgo was rector and teacher. As soon as he could pass the examination he took orders, and becoming like Hidalgo an ordained priest was given charge of some small rural parishes on the Western coast of Michoacan. When the cry of Dolores reached him, the blood was stirred in his veins, and he set out at once for Guanajuato. Meeting his old teacher, he offered his services at once and was given authority to raise an army for independence in the Southwest. He left upon this errand, and the two men never met again. It was only a few months before Hidalgo was executed at Chihuahua, a thousand miles to the North, and his compatriot, five years later, met the same fate under the walls of San Cristobal, in the far South.

Morelos started from his own parish with a force of twenty-five men, a few of them armed with guns, some with lances, and the rest with sticks; but it was the germ of the army which shook the Spanish power in Mexico to its foundations and finally won the liberty of its country.

Every race that ever has been has had to stand the baptism of fire. Probably every race that ever is to be must go through the same experience. No race of men can succeed or perpetrate itself without this test of its heroic virtue.

The time has come for the new Mexican race to submit itself to the inevitable ordeal. For nearly three hundred years they have been growing and multiplying. Some ten generations have lived and died since first the Spanish cavalier took the Nahua maiden for his bride in this new land beyond the sea. The race which has risen has now the

stamp of three centuries ; but it had been three centuries of peace, quiet, and order. There had been in Mexico, during all this time since the Conquest, nothing which can be dignified with the name of war. The wild Indians had occasionally broken out in the mountains, and small troops of soldiers had been sent to subdue them. The pirate ships of the Spanish Main had now and then skirted the coasts of Mexico and disturbed some of the seaport towns. Once in a while there had been some civil commotion, a strike among the laborers, or a demand for bread from the hungry populace. But these were all but ordinary and transient troubles and of little consequence in the history of a nation or a race.

Now the supreme moment has come. The new Mexican race must live or die according as it stands this test of tests.

It certainly had a leader worthy of the occasion. It has been said that whenever a great commander is wanted he always appears at the right moment. I am inclined to think that this is more poetry than fact. We sometimes have to wait long and patiently for the right man to come. But the hour of supreme trial, when the fate of a nation or of a race hangs in the balance, is the hour that will discover and disclose the hero if the hero is there.

Morelos is now our hero. At Acapulco he learned of the capture and death of Hidalgo, and then he knew that the hope of his race, and it may be the hope of liberty for all mankind, rested with him.

He commenced at once to assemble, organize, and discipline his famous army. You must remember the materials which he had at his command ;—raw rustics who had never seen danger and perhaps never fired a gun ; new men, untaught, undisciplined, and untried ; men of a new race, with no pride of ancestry to elevate their souls, and no record of heroic deeds to inspire them ; men totally unused to act in concert or to co-operate with one another, unaccustomed to manage their own affairs or to formulate their own opinions ; for centuries the willing slaves of the king and the easy victims of the Church. If you would compare their deeds with the soldiers of our revolution, compare first our advantages with theirs. Washington had in his soldiers the result of the education, development, culture, and courage of untold generations. Morelos had, at the best, only the rawest materials for heroes.

At first they showed little even of that. At Aguacatillo, a detachment of the Independents met one day a Royalist force, like them levied from the rustics of the country. Their conduct on that day reminds us of the celebrated duel of Bob Acres. Both sides indulged for a few minutes in some wild and reckless shooting, and then the Independent troops turned and ran without looking to see what had become of their opponents. A drummer-boy, more curious if not more brave than the rest, climbed a tree to see what the Royalists were doing. He found that they were running still faster in the other direction. He called back the insurgents. They turned, chased and captured the Royalists, and won a glorious victory without the loss of a man on either side.

But Morelos, by persistent education and discipline, and by the indomitable zeal and valor which he not only displayed himself on all occasions but succeeded in communicating to those around him, soon turned this wild, unconglomerated mass into an army of which neither Washington nor Wellington need have been ashamed.

I have not time to follow the early career of our priest-captain in the West. He had succeeded in winning to the cause of independence the people of Southern and Western Mexico, and in driving the Royalists back almost to the very gates of the capital. No soldiers had ever behaved more valiantly, and no captain had ever commanded better. But I must pass over all this and come to Cuautla.

Calleja was in the North with his triumphant army. It was the best-equipped and best-disciplined body of soldiers that had ever been on American soil. In it were now the finest troops of Spain; among others, that famous regiment of Asturias, which had carried off the honors at Belen, where it had defeated the French with great slaughter and won for itself the proud name of "The Victors of the Victors of Austerlitz."

Viceroy Venegas sat in his vice-regal palace, and as he heard of the progress of Morelos he trembled, not only for the power of Spain in Mexico, but for his own personal safety. Messenger after messenger was despatched for the great army of Calleja to come and save them from this little parish priest and his force of rude rustics. Calleja came. He was to crush Morelos as you would crush an egg-shell in your hand. But although against him was coming all the power of

Spain, with the best general, the best army, and the best equipments of every kind that Spain and Mexico could furnish, Morelos with his little band was undaunted and unterrified, and at Cuautla in the South he calmly awaited the approach of the Royalist hosts.

The name of this place is of Indian origin. It is derived from the Aztec words "*quauh*," meaning eagle, and "*tlan*," place. Cuautla therefore means the place where the eagle builds her nest. It became the nesting-place of liberty, and in it the freedom of a race was hatched.

We are on historic ground. The city of Cuautla lies some sixty miles directly south from the City of Mexico. A little to the Northeast are Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, whose summits rise so high that even here in the tropics they are capped with perpetual white as with the mantle of heaven. Farther to the east the famous Orizaba raises its snow-capped summit. Still nearer are the pyramids of Cholula and Otumba, rivalling in grandeur and historic interest their sisters in the valley of the Nile. A few miles to the southwest are the renowned mines of Tazco, among the richest of the world, worked long before the days of Columbus by the Aztecs of old, and still yielding their abundance to the people of modern Mexico. Just a little farther to the south is the town of Iguala, afterwards famous for all time as the place where Vicente Guerrero and Iturbide met and issued the "Plan of Iguala," which rang the death-knell of the Spanish power in Mexico. Still a little farther to the south is the mountain village of Chilpanzingo, where Morelos assembled the first Mexican Congress, and decreed in the same act the independence of his country and the freedom of the slave. Still farther to the west is the port of Acapulco, to which for three hundred years had been brought the rich fabrics of the Orient, to be from thence distributed through all New Spain.

Wellington once asked of a Mexican he met in Europe, "Where was this Cuautla?" and he was answered that it was a small open city, upon a level plain. Wellington replied: "This shows the sagacity of Morelos." The place was in fact selected with rare judgment and discrimination by our little priest-commander for his desperate stand. No mountain fortress could have answered his purpose half so well. He attempted no exterior fortifications whatsoever, but inside the town he showed that the parish *cura* was no mean military engineer. He

walled up the doors and lower windows of the houses, and cut inside communications through the walls from one house to another. He barricaded the streets in some places and dug deep trenches in others. He hoarded his ammunition and provisions, drilled his men night and day, and waited for Calleja. Calleja came and immediately stormed the place in four columns, one on each side, confident of immediate success. And why should he not be confident? It was the same army that triumphed at Calderon, Guanajuato, Valladolid, and Zitacuaro. It had never known defeat or check. It was now reinforced with these victorious Spanish troops, the best soldiers in the world, and Calleja himself was a commander greater perhaps than any other that America had seen since the time of Cortez. Calleja's columns approach; infantry, artillery and cavalry are in motion. The Mexicans allow them to come within a hundred yards of their intrenchments. Morelos had told them to wait until they could aim at the eyes of their opponents. They did. Then they opened so tremendous and persistent a fire that the best troops of Spain and all the world fell back in wild disorder.

There were, during these days, many deeds of individual heroism well worthy of record in history. Galeano, one of the lieutenants of Morelos, seeing a Spanish colonel trying to rally his flying regiment, sallied out against him alone, engaged him single-handed, and killed him on the spot, and as may be imagined, the regiment of the dead colonel only fled the faster. In another part of the field Don José Maria Fernandez, afterwards known as Guadalupe Victoria, threw himself in front of a desperate charge of a Royalist detachment and saved the life of his commander. Vicente Guerrero and Sandoval had fortified themselves on the outskirts of the town, on a little plaza, and with a small force hurled back the repeated charges of the best of the Spanish troops led by General Llano. Miguel Bravo and the fighting Cura of Tapia hovered around on the outside with troops of cavalry, cutting off the Royalists' supplies and ammunition, and giving them no moment's rest anywhere. Leonardo Bravo held, against overwhelming odds, the plaza of Santo Domingo, and the priest Matamoras, fresh from his prayers and his church, fought as fiercely as the oldest soldier. Morelos himself was everywhere. With his eagle eye upon all parts of the field, guiding and directing every movement of his troops,

regardless of personal peril, he was ever at the weakest point and imparting his own valor, courage, and enthusiasm to each individual soldier in his army. He never said, "Go!" but always, "Come!" and there was not a man under him who would not have been proud to have followed him even to certain death. Everybody joined in the fight. There were not arms enough to go around; but the Indians stood upon the house-tops and used their slings and hurled down stones; the women carried ammunition to the soldiers; and even the children picked up the spent cannon-balls in the streets, and brought them to the warriors that they might send them back on their errand of death.

Time and again Calleja led his cohorts against this army of liberty, but in vain. The action lasted, this first day, from seven o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon. A final attempt was made by Calleja to decoy the forces of Morelos from his intrenchments by pretending to abandon his artillery. But Morelos was not to be caught.

Time and again, after this day, Calleja was urged and entreated by Viceroy Venegas to make another assault upon Cuautla, but he steadfastly refused. Nothing could induce him to try it again. He had had enough of it. He sent to Mexico for long siege guns and attempted to batter down the town. Again cannon-balls and shell came thick and fast, but again it was in vain. There was nothing left for Calleja to do but to blockade the town and try to starve it out. Morelos knew that the destiny of Mexico and the hope of liberty depended upon his successful resistance. Hidalgo slain in the North, Valladolid captured, Zitacuara destroyed, the Junta dispersed, Rayon a fugitive, no other organized force worthy of the name fighting for the independence of Mexico, if his army should be destroyed, then there would be indeed no hope for his country. If he could only hold out until the rainy season commenced Calleja would have to raise the siege, for Cuautla is in the Tierra Calliente, fevers come with the rain, and the European troops would be lost. If the rainy season had come as usual, this is what would have happened. But this time, the Lord seemed to be fighting on the side of the Royalists, and the rains this year were two months late.

Calleja fully appreciated the heroism and ability of Morelos. He calls him, in his despatches to Mexico, "a second Mahomet, fighting,"

he says, "with a firmness worthy of a better cause." He had yet to learn that there can be no better cause than that of human liberty.

Not all the troops of the Royalists, gathered from all Mexico and all Spain, could dislodge Morelos from Cuautla. The weapons of human foes could not prevail against him. But he was finally driven out by an enemy stronger and more irresistible than mortal power. It was hunger. Their food gave out. They stood it like heroes day after day, waiting for relief, but none came. Every effort was made to bring provisions in, but the place was closely invested, and on the open plain the Spanish troops were superior. Famine now prevailed inside the town to a horrible extent. Maize was almost the only sustenance of the troops, and there was little even of that. They were hungry enough to eat anything. A cat was sold for six dollars, a lizard for two dollars, and rats and other vermin for one. An ox which was seen feeding one day between the Spanish camp and the town nearly brought on a general action, for the troops near by, unable to resist the temptation, rushed out to seize the prey, and were attacked while bringing it away by so strong a party of the enemy that Morelos had to draw out nearly his whole army to save them.

Disease too began to show itself in its most frightful shape, and nearly three hundred sick were lodged in the Hospital of San Diego alone, and yet such was the influence of this man over every one around him that they endured all their sufferings with undaunted heroism. No one spoke of surrender, no one complained, for did not their brave commander share every peril and suffer all they suffered? Heroism is contagious and every heart was full of it. But heroism cannot supply the place of food. Morelos saw that he must evacuate Cuautla. To surrender would destroy the hopes of independence in Mexico, and moreover would be the death doom of every man in the place, for Calleja gave no quarter. Here, at this trying moment, the spirit of the patriot and the skill of the commander is shown at its best. One dark night the troops were marshalled silently; the order to proceed was given; Galeano took command of the advance guard, Morelos himself of the centre, and the Bravos, Leonardo and Nicolas, of the rear. Silently they marched out, passing right under the guns of the enemy, and so skilfully was it all planned, and so superb was the discipline, that they

were not discovered till they had crossed the river, got beyond the intrenchments of the enemy, and the open country was before them. Then, too late, the Spanish camp was aroused and an attack on all sides was ordered. But Morelos was prepared for this. He gave the preconcerted signal, and that army of five thousand men melted away as if by magic and disappeared into the darkness, over the plains and into the mountains, where no enemy could follow. When the Spanish forces came from each direction to where the army of Morelos ought to be all ready to be closed upon and crushed, they saw, through the darkness, only the dim figure of their own battalions, and mistaking friends for enemies, fired upon one another. Morelos had arranged that when he gave the order for dispersion the troops should scatter and meet again as soon as possible at Izucar, some twenty miles away. Two days afterwards they were there, and it is said that of this whole army only seventeen were missing; but among those seventeen was Leonardo Bravo. Ever at the post of danger, he was hindmost of all, and was captured while guarding the rear. More of him hereafter.

There is nothing in all the heroic records in history which to my mind compares with the retreat, dispersion, and re-assembling of this army of Morelos. The cause of the revolution then appeared almost a forlorn hope. No one knew better than the patriot priest and the troops under him how much they had to contend with and how greatly the chances were against them; and yet, so far as is known without a single desertion, these five thousand men scattered over the plains and the mountains and came together again at the call of their leader, filled with the same undaunted enthusiasm which had sustained him all the way through, and preferring rather to die for liberty than to live without it.

And these men were of a race which had never before known war, and they themselves had had no previous civil or military experience. They were simply, when Morelos took them, uneducated, untrained, undisciplined rustics and clod-hoppers. But the magic power of a great cause, and the resistless enthusiasm of a noble leader had transformed them into heroes, the peers of the most heroic men of the most heroic race that ever lived.

Thus they gathered together again at Izucar, resolved to be free or die. A race had been baptized and a nation was born.

Calleja was glad enough to sneak back to Mexico. He had had enough of it. He might have pursued Morelos and come up very close to him ; but he felt like the man who was hunting the bear ; it was all right until the tracks became too fresh. If Venegas was going to send him after Morelos again, he preferred to let Morelos have a good start.

Calleja nevertheless essayed to enter the capital in triumph. He had been sent to capture Cuautla, and he had captured it. He had been sent to disperse the army of Morelos, and he had dispersed it,—after a fashion. But the people in Mexico seemed to understand pretty correctly the true situation of affairs. They saw that the great Spanish General had been outwitted by the humble parish priest from Carácuaro.

A comedy was acted at a social entertainment in the city, a few nights after the return of Calleja, in which a soldier appeared returning from battle, and presenting his general with a turban, telling him in a very pompous manner, “ Here is the turban of the Moor whom I took prisoner ? ” “ And the Moor himself ? ” said the general. “ Oh, he unfortunately escaped. ” The application was plain, and the chagrin of Calleja was almost beyond endurance.

Morelos waited some time at Izucar. The mental strain had been too much for him. He was sick. That tremendous nervous energy of his had to be recruited ; but the priest Matamoras, now second in command, reorganized the troops, and put them under the best possible discipline, so that as soon as Morelos was well, they were ready to start upon that memorable campaign in the far South. I will not follow our hero in his victorious march through Oaxaca. No raw levies which the Royalists could muster there could stand against him for a moment. His army was proof everywhere against anything less than the old Spanish regiments, and even the Victors of the Victors of Austerlitz had learned to have a very wholesome respect for the soldier-priest.

Morelos was no less a statesman than a soldier. He saw that there must be something besides an army if Mexico was to be a nation. He determined to organize a government, and on the 13th of October, 1813, the first Mexican Congress met at Chilpanzingo, a little town not far from Acapulco. All the provinces of Mexico which were under the control of the patriots were represented by elected delegates, and for

those which could not be reached delegates were selected by the others. The Congress declared the independence of Mexico, proclaimed the freedom of the slave, and organized a Constitution. Calleja, who had now become viceroy, determined to capture this body, and so, by one stroke, put an end to the rebellion. He led his large and disciplined army out against it. Morelos had only a handful of men for the defence, but he fought heroically to the end. He succeeded in saving the Congress, but not himself. The last man of his army to leave the field of battle, he fell into the hands of the enemy. There was no doubt as to what his fate would be. No patriot captured by Calleja ever lived to fight again. Morelos was taken to the City of Mexico and tried ; not by court-martial as a soldier, but by the Inquisition as a priest. His offence was not treason, but heresy ; the heresy of believing that man was born to be free. He was of course convicted, handed over to the military authorities for execution, and on the 22d of December, 1815, he was removed from the prison of the Inquisition to the Hospital of San Cristobal, behind which the sentence against him was to be carried out. As he stood there, in front of the platoon of soldiers who with loaded guns was ready to take aim at his heart, he made this last prayer :

“Lord, if I have done well, Thou knowest it ; if ill, to Thy infinite mercy I commend my soul.”

Thus died as pious a priest, as brave a soldier, as skilful a commander, as pure a patriot, and as noble a hero as has ever lived.

The Government vainly thought that with the death of Morelos would come the end of the rebellion ; but the humble Cura of Carácuaro had planted the seed of liberty so deep in the hearts of the Mexican people that nothing but extermination could ever destroy it.

The armies of the patriots were dispersed ; their leaders were captured and shot ; but still the flame was not extinguished. Time went on till 1820, and all that appeared to be left of the rebellion was the indomitable Vicente Guerrero, with two thousand brave and undaunted soldiers concealed in the mountains of the Sierra Madre in the South. Then Iturbide came forward, a new recruit from the Royalist to the Republican cause. He joins his forces with those of Guerrero. The Royalist army, which had done so much to destroy the revolution, now

turned patriots, and Iturbide attempts to gain the credit and win the rewards of his country's freedom. But it could not be. The memory of Hidalgo and Morelos and of the other heroes who had fallen was too fresh in the minds of the people ever to be obscured. Mexico is independent. Iturbide for the moment is the hero; but the nation soon recovers its reason, and to the old leaders who have survived are given the places of honor, distinction, and responsibility.

I cannot complete this story of the siege of Cuautla without a brief account of the subsequent career of some of the men who were there under Morelos.

I have spoken of Leonardo Bravo, who led the rear upon the retreat, and who was captured whilst saving the rest of the army. His son, Nicolas, who was with him, escaped. Morelos had then three hundred prisoners from the Spanish army in his quarters. He turned them over to Nicolas Bravo to dispose of as he would, to save his father's life or to avenge his death. The father Leonardo and the son Nicolas were two of the loveliest characters in history. Pure and true patriots, untrained in war, unused to command, of quiet and gentle natures, they had embraced the cause of Morelos for the reason that it was the cause of liberty. Once soldiers, they became the best of soldiers. No men were ever more valiant, few commanders ever more skilful. They loved one another as not many fathers and sons have ever loved, and the Viceroy knew it.

Leonardo was taken to Mexico, and Venegas sends him word, "If you will but write a letter to Nicolas asking him to lay down his arms, your life shall be saved and you shall be free." Leonardo replies: "I love my son better than I love my life, but if he did that, I would kill him with my own hand!" Nicolas offers to exchange the three hundred prisoners, full-blooded Spaniards, for his father. Calleja, in a brief letter, declines the offer, and in his postscript adds, "Don Leonardo is ordered to immediate execution."

Nicolas Bravo was only a Mexican.

On receiving this contemptuous and heartless message from Calleja, Nicolas releases the three hundred prisoners, wishing, as he said, to put it out of his own power to avenge on them the death of his parent, lest in some moment of grief the temptation should prove irresistible. An

eye-witness of the scene reports the speech that Nicolas made when the prisoners were brought before him to be released, as follows :

"Your lives," he says, "are forfeit. Your master, Spain's minion, has murdered my father, murdered him in cold blood for choosing Mexico and liberty before Spain and her tyrannies. Some of you are fathers and may imagine what my father felt in being thrust from the world without one farewell word from his son—ay ! and your sons may feel a portion of that anguish of soul which fills my breast, as thoughts arise of my father's wrongs and cruel death.

"And what a master is this you serve ! For one life, my poor father's, he might have saved you all, and would not. So deadly is his hate that he would sacrifice three hundred of his friends rather than forego this one sweet morsel of vengeance. Even I, who am no viceroy, have three hundred lives for my father's. But there is yet a nobler revenge than all. Go, you are free ! Go find your vile master, and henceforth serve him if you can !"

I have failed to find in history the story of an educated and cultured Saxon more worthy of love and honor than this untutored Mexican.

Nicolas Bravo lived to see the cause of independence triumph, and to become President of the Mexican Republic.

Among those I have mentioned at Cuautla was Guadalupe Victoria, then known by his real name of Don José Maria Fernandez. He was a young law student, of the age of twenty-two, pursuing his studies in the City of Mexico, when the Revolution broke out. He did not join Hidalgo ; he could not see in him the true leader for so great a cause. It was not till Morelos appeared that he joined his fortunes with those of the Revolution ; but from that time on he was a hero among heroes. I have told how at Cuautla he saved the life of Morelos by rushing in front of him in the face of a desperate charge. Through all the siege he was foremost in deeds of valor, and on the retreat he took the post of danger. He followed the fortunes of the Revolution to the end. He was with Morelos in Oaxaca, with him at the siege of Acapulco, with the army when Morelos was captured, and after the death of his chief he fought as long as he could find a place to defend or a soldier to follow him. At last, in 1816, most of his compatriots had been captured or slain, the insurgents were being suppressed upon all sides, and

soon nothing remained of the revolution except Guerrero's little band in the mountains in the South. The Government offered pardon to all who would come in and accept it. Many did so. It was offered to Guadalupe, and pressed upon him. He preferred death to submission. Then a price was set upon his head. Armies were sent to hunt him. Any village where he obtained food was immediately destroyed. It was declared to be certain death to know his whereabouts and not give him up. It was under such circumstances and to escape such a hunt that Victoria took to the mountains, and from this time until 1821, when the cause of independence revived under Iturbide, he lived alone and unattended in the solitudes of the Sierras. For thirty months he did not see a human being or taste bread. In the summer he lived upon fruits, and in the winter upon roots and whatever else he could find. He was glad even to gnaw the bones of dead beasts. The clothing which he had on him when he disappeared was all torn to rags, and nothing was left but a single cotton wrapper which he had somewhere found. And yet he would not submit. The troops that were sent to hunt him became tired of the fruitless quest and reported him dead, and so he was believed to be, by friend and foe alike. The last person he parted with when he disappeared into the wilderness was a faithful Indian, who said to him as he went away, "If things change and you can come back safely, where shall I find you?" and Victoria pointed to a high mountain dimly outlined in the distance, "You will find me or my bones somewhere on that mountain." Five years after that the cause which had been so dear to Victoria's heart was triumphant, and this faithful Indian set out to find his friend. He searched all over the mountain, and was about to give up in despair when he saw a footprint in the soft earth. He knew it to be the footprint of a man of European origin, that is, of a man who had worn shoes (the Indian always went barefoot or wore sandals.) This faithful man inferred that Victoria had been that way and would return again. He waited several days till his stock of provisions was nearly exhausted, and then went back for a fresh supply, leaving, however, as a sign to Victoria if he should come that way, a few tortillas hung up by a string over the path.

A short time afterwards Guadalupe returned and found the tortillas.

He had not tasted food for four days. He was so famished that he devoured them before he thought why they were there. Then he reasoned that it must be either the signal of a friend or the ambush of a foe. He would hide and wait. The Indian soon came back. Guadalupe presented himself but was not recognized. His beard and his hair had been growing for four years. He had on him no clothing except the ragged remnants of that one cotton sheet. His nails had grown like claws; his body was gaunt and emaciated, and he was almost in the last stages of starvation. He convinced the Indian of his identity and went back with him, and as soon as it was known that Victoria was alive and returned there was such a universal rejoicing as Mexico has never known before or since. He became the national hero and remained so till he died. He was the first President of the Republic, and while he lived he was, as Porfirio Diaz seems now to be, the one man in the nation whom all factions were willing entirely to trust.

And yet he was only a Mexican.

Among others there at Cuautla was Vicente Guerrero. I have already referred to him as the one leader who kept the flame of the Revolution alive in the Sierra Madres in the South when it was extinguished everywhere else. He was the connecting link between Hidalgo and Iturbide. He survived the Revolution and succeeded Victoria as President of the Republic.

There were many others there at Cuautla well worthy of special notice, but time does not allow me to mention them here. All the Galeanos, bravest among the brave, were slain during the war. Miguel and Victor Bravo, brothers of Nicolas and sons of Leonardo, were also slain. Matamoras, the brother priest of Morelos and his second in command, was captured and shot. But I must stop, for among the five thousand soldiers were five thousand heroes, every one of them worthy of a monument.

It has been customary to ridicule and asperse the Mexican nation and the Mexican people because after their war of the Revolution they did not succeed for many years in establishing a stable, orderly, and efficient government such as ours. But we should remember again the difficulties which the Mexican statesmen had to confront and the comparatively easy task which we here in the North undertook. Professor

Fiske tells, in his great book on the *The Critical Period of American History*, something of the difficulties we had in establishing our national government after the Revolution. It was only by a very close shave that even we escaped anarchy : and yet we had the advantage of well-established, well-regulated and efficient Town, County, and State governments. We belonged to a race which had won its substantial liberty long centuries before, a race which had been accustomed to govern itself, both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs, from the time of King John down, a race which had always had some form of a Town Meeting and a national parliament, a race which had inherited its freedom even from its wild Germanic ancestors. On the other hand, in Mexico was a new, untried, and inexperienced race, the growth of only three centuries, a race which had always been down-trodden and despised, a race which had never been allowed to govern itself, to manage its own affairs or to do its own thinking ; a race which drew its blood from the bigoted Spaniard and the untutored Indian ; a race which received its first baptism in this War of Independence and won then, for the first time, its right to assert itself among the races of the earth. The war was ended and Mexico was independent of Spain, but it had lost its best blood during the struggle, and the people who survived had yet to learn the first principles of practical statesmanship.

Cannot you give to such a race and such a people, under such circumstances, a little more time than the proud Puritan and the cultured cavalier took in the colonies of the North ? In 1857, under the leadership of Benito Juarez, a full-blooded Indian, and of Porfirio Díaz, a typical Mexican, Mexico completed her revolutionary struggle by overthrowing the authority of the Church and adopting a liberal constitution. Then came the French intervention and the second struggle for independence ; but in 1867 the cause of liberty had again triumphed, Juarez was seated in the Presidential chair, the new Constitution was recognized, and religious freedom promulgated and acknowledged on every foot of Mexican soil. A few years later, Díaz, the compatriot of Juarez, succeeds him in the presidential chair, and, from that day to this, there has been no just cause for complaint as to the stability and efficiency of the government of our sister Republic in the South. She has progressed rapidly in material prosperity, in mental and moral de-

velopment, and in all that makes a nation great ; and those who know her best are the most sure that she is now, finally and forever, redeemed.

To my mind those who brought Mexico from the infancy of her liberty to the well-ordered development of to-day, who helped her through her struggles for independence, through her early civil wars, through her contest with our country when we should have been a friend instead of an enemy, through the struggle with the Church and the French invasion, are as much entitled to the name of statesmen as the men who won the independence of the United States and gave us our Constitution and form of government.

I have called the siege of Cuautla the Bunker Hill of Mexico. Cuautla and Bunker Hill were alike in form defeats. The patriot army in both cases retreated and left the enemy in possession of the field, and yet in both cases the contest, though apparently a defeat, was a substantial victory. In 1776 it was shown that American yeomen could stand up against British regulars, and if need be, die with their faces to the enemy. In 1812 the Mexican rustics, with the little priest at their head, were able to show at Cuautla that not all the power of Spain or all the soldiers of Asturias could crush the spirit of liberty which had been aroused in the breast of the new Mexican race.

Shall not then the descendants of the heroes of Bunker Hill and the sons of sires who fought at Cuautla be equally proud of each other and of the fact that they are all Americans?



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